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Draft Record of Decision

Mt. Hood Meadows Parking Improvements EIS

**Mt. Hood National Forest, Hood River Ranger District
Hood River County**



Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Lift



DRAFT RECORD OF DECISION

Mt. Hood Meadows Parking Improvements

**U.S. Forest Service
Mt. Hood National Forest
Hood River County, Oregon**

Lead Agency: U.S. Forest Service

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

In March 2009, Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort (MHM) requested the Forest Service consider a proposal to build a new parking lot east of Elk Meadows trailhead and west of the Oregon Department of Transportation maintenance yard with access via Forest Service Road 3545. In addition to the new parking lot, MHM requested the Forest Service to consider their proposal to move and upgrade the vehicle maintenance building in April 2011. The Forest Service started actively planning these projects in spring 2011, including refining these proposals based on preliminary effects analysis.

1.1. Background

Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort has seen a steady increase in skier visits over the past ten seasons and managers anticipate this trend will continue at a slightly higher rate than the estimated population growth of the Portland metropolitan area. Since opening in 1967/68, the number of skier visits has grown from 55,564 to over 500,000. During the 1970s, the average annual rate of growth was twice the Oregon average at 4.6 percent. From 1984 to 1989, the average annual rate of growth has been 2.14 percent, with an annual average of 325,000 skier visits. During the 2007/08 ski season, the number visitations at MHM peaked at over 500,000 visits. The 10-year average for annual visitation from 2001 to 2011 was 409,514 and the three-year average from 2008 to 2011 was 441,108 visits. Based on this trend, use of the ski area is expected to continue to increase.

MHM currently provides parking at three parking areas: 1) Main Lodge Base; 2) Sunrise Annex Lot; and, 3) Hood River Meadow Lot (HRM). Storm water management and snow storage are incorporated into the design of the existing parking areas. Including the areas used for storm water and snow storage, the total area cleared to facilitate parking is 35.8 acres (see FEIS, Section 3.1, Recreation). Approximately 22 acres of this are used solely as space for parking. In addition to the on-site parking, shuttle services are offered to bring people to the resort.

There is generally adequate parking within the three parking areas at MHM during weekdays. However, during peak use days, typically occurring on holidays and weekends, all three of the existing parking lots are near capacity and/or reach their maximum capacity. As the lots fill, roadside signs inform visitors as to which lots to use. Users are guided by parking lot attendees to appropriate areas and generally walk or take shuttle buses to the needed facilities or ski lift access. On peak use days this experience can involve a long walk from the back of the lots carrying downhill equipment. In the event that the parking areas reach maximum capacity, users are turned away. On the peak use days, the parking lots are totally full generally between 9:30 and 11:00. Antidotal evidence shows that approximately 250 cars are turned away on these peak days. These visitors have continued to attempt to find additional parking in other less desirable and potentially dangerous locations, such as alongside Highway 35 or Forest Service Road (FSR) 3545.

In addition, MHM operates a Nordic Center within the HRM parking lot. It currently provides equipment rental, ticket sales and Nordic skiing lessons. Parking for the Nordic Center/Trails is currently shared with the HRM parking lot and lift access. The Nordic Center facilities are located at the opposite side of the parking area from the HRM facilities and lift access. As a result,

parking is almost always available for the Nordic Center. On peak use days however, parking for both Nordic and downhill skiing can become scarce. In the event the ski resort reaches maximum capacity, visitors for both uses are turned away.

Further, the existing maintenance facilities are co-located in the Mt Hood Meadows Main Parking Lot. These facilities, built in 1967, are not large enough to service the number and size of the snow cat, snowmobile, truck, and bus fleet. As a result, the industrial buses are parked and serviced outside the maintenance facilities. Combining the industrial bus parking and vehicle maintenance functions with the public areas at the Main Parking Lot presents safety concerns related to traffic flow and the maintenance activities outside the facilities. Also, the location of the current maintenance shop removes potential parking capacity at the Main Parking lot.

When parking facilities are filled to capacity at the ski area, customers choose to park along the access roads to both the Main Parking Lot (FSR 3555) and to the Hood River Meadows Parking Lot (FSR 3545), Highway 35, as well as Sno-Parks located near Nordic ski trails along Highway 35. Previously, approximately 440 cars parked along the access roads on peak days. Parking along the access roads and highway, however, creates an unsafe situation when people are walking along these roads to reach the shuttle pick-up points. Also, as people park along the Hood River Meadows access road (FSR 3545) and highway, the northbound and southbound traffic on Highway 35 is slowed, and at peak ski traffic times, temporarily stopped due to traffic waiting to turn across the southbound lane onto the access road. This congestion created by the traffic can limit ingress and egress by emergency vehicles and shuttle buses, constrain the ability for snow plow equipment to operate safely and effectively, and limit driver line-of-sight along Highway 35. Parking along the access roads within the Permit Area is not allowed under MHM special use permit.

1.2. Purpose of and Need for Action

Because parking facilities at MHM are often filled to capacity, there is the need to provide additional parking within the MHM permit area. This need for expanded parking is also supported by the need to improve traffic flow and public and customer safety along the access routes (i.e., FSR 3545 and Highway 26) to MHM as well as within the Main Parking Lot.

The need for additional parking was identified in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Master Plan (page 10). The need for new maintenance facilities also was identified in the ROD for the Master Plan (page 9). Therefore, the primary purpose of this project is to serve the design capacity for parking, including area for snow storage, and maintenance facilities that was conceptually approved while minimizing environmental impacts from parking lot construction and maintenance, as was outlined in the Master Plan in 1997.

The geographic scope of the project includes the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort permit area and access road to the permit area. See the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), Figure 1-1, Vicinity Map for the location of the permit area.

1.3. Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan

In January 1997, the Forest Service issued the ROD for Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (hereafter referred to as the Master Plan), including Forest Plan Amendment No. 10. The Master Plan was based on the analysis contained in the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (December 1990) and the Final Supplemental EIS (June 1996). The Master Plan defines the desired future condition for an expanded permit area; provides general direction for future development at MHM; and establishes winter sports design capacity and summer use maximum capacities. The approval for future development does not authorize specific facilities or uses, define the exact location of facilities, nor stipulate a timeline for development. Rather, it conceptually approves the number and approximate locations of lifts, additional ski terrain, base area expansions, other winter facilities and uses, access and service roads, and summer uses. Implementation, including this project, requires additional site-specific environmental analysis pursuant to requirements in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Specific management direction from the Master Plan for this project includes the following.

- The existing Westside base is expanded by up to 9.5 acres to accommodate up to three acres for new maintenance facilities (page 9).
- Consider locating new maintenance facilities at the site of the existing administration building versus in the middle or lower portions of the expanded base area. This area offers several distinct advantages: it has previously been committed to development, provides easy access for grooming machines to ski slopes, and represents an opportunity to provide a small area for employee parking (page 10).
- A total of up to 8 acres of additional parking is authorized as part of the base area expansions. Storm water management and snow storage are included in, rather than in addition to, this total (page 10).

This ROD and accompanying FEIS incorporates by reference the analysis and management direction contained in the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement, Final Supplemental EIS, and Record of Decision (1997).

2.0. DECISION

Based upon my review of the analysis and alternatives, I have decided to implement the Preferred Alternative as described in the FEIS, Section 2.2.6. Appendix 1 of this Decision Notice contains maps of the Selected Alternative. All project design criteria/mitigation measures (PDC) that apply to this decision are included in Appendix 2 of this ROD. The PDC are intended to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, eliminate and/or compensate for project impacts. The PDC are an integral and required component part of this project.

In order to provide additional parking to serve current use and the design capacity that was conceptually approved in the ROD and Master Plan, a 7.2 acre parking lot for both downhill

and Nordic customers will be constructed (see Figure 2). This new parking lot, referred to as the Twilight Parking Lot, will be located east of the Elk Meadows trailhead and west of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) maintenance yard with access via FSR 3545. In total, 9.4 acres will be cleared for this parking lot, snow storage, and a storm water facility. The overall parking capacity for MHM will be 3,526 vehicles, including the additional 878 vehicles from the Twilight Parking Lot.

Also, to improve parking capacity as well as customer safety, the vehicle maintenance functions will be moved away from the Mt. Hood Meadows Main Parking Lot and located near the existing Sunrise Parking Lot and will be accessed from FSR 3555. The shop building will be approximately 65 by 150 feet in size and constructed on 2.5 acres. The existing shop will initially be used for storage. The existing generators and electrical distribution will remain within the existing shop. The existing fuel tanks and equipment will remain on-site and will continue to comply with underground storage tank regulations until removal or replacement when the building is re-purposed. It may be re-purposed for skier service in the future; however, this will potentially require additional site-specific NEPA depending on the proposed actions.

Additionally, in order to accomplish the activities proposed above, this alternative includes the following.

- Twilight Parking Lot Equipment Maintenance Yard (Bus Shop) – An additional 2.9 acres will be cleared for an equipment maintenance yard, which will include bus and snow equipment parking and a maintenance building. The bus shop will be co-located with the Twilight Parking Lot.
- Access Roads – Two access roads (approximately 500 feet or 0.9 acres) will be constructed with the parking lot. One access road will lead to the Twilight Parking Lot Equipment Maintenance Yard (140 feet) and the other to the Twilight Parking Lot (360 feet). Additionally, a 130-foot access road (0.2 acres) will be constructed to the Sunrise Maintenance Shop.
- Nordic Guest Services Building – In order to serve both downhill and Nordic skiers, a guest services building will be constructed within the Twilight Parking Lot area. The services to be included are: bathrooms, lockers, food and beverage services, guest seating, Nordic equipment rental, and a covered bus stop. The approximate dimension of the guest services building will be 35 by 60 feet.

At this time, there are no firm plans for the existing modular building: 1) it could remain in place for the near term; 2) the bathroom could be used by guests who park nearby; or 3) the building is portable so it could be moved to another location or off-site in the future. If the building is moved, site-specific NEPA will be completed, if required.

Lastly, there are several connected actions associated with these proposals. Actions are connected if they: (i) automatically trigger other actions which may require environmental impact statements; (ii) cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously; or (iii) are interdependent parts of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification. The connected actions for this alternative are listed below.

- Utility Lines (power, water, sewer and telephone) – Utility lines will be buried under an existing Nordic trail from the current Nordic Center to the Twilight Lot in two 36-inch deep trenches separated by at least 10-feet following existing clearings. A 1,750-foot water line will also be buried into the same corridor as an existing power line from the Administrative Building and shorter sewer line extended into the Sunrise Lot.
- Turn Lanes – In order to improve public and customer safety (traffic flow) on Highway 35 and FSR 3545, left- and right-turn lanes with adequate vehicle storage for northbound and southbound traffic at the intersection of the highway and access road will be constructed. Construction of the turn lanes will impact 3.3 acres, which includes 0.5 acres of new disturbance and 2.8 acres of disturbance within the existing road prism for Highway 35.
- Wetland Relocation – The proposed right turn lane will remove less than an acre of wetlands located immediately adjacent to Highway 35. It appears this wetland was formed partially by interception of groundwater by construction of the ditchline and snowmelt runoff from the forested area to the north. To mitigate this loss of wetland, a new wetland of equal or greater size will be created in approximately the same location relative to the newly constructed right-turn lane. As a result, there will be no net loss in wetlands.
- Nordic Ski Trails – The proposed Twilight Parking Lot will remove approximately a half mile (or 2,746 feet) of Nordic ski trails from the Hanel and Little Loops. The trails constructed as a connected action are the same as Alternative 3 as shown in Figure 2. This includes approximately 0.7 mile (or 3,432 feet) miles of new Nordic ski trails, resulting in a net increase of 0.1 mile (or 686 feet). All new Nordic trails will be 25-foot clearings with an additional 8 feet of thinning on either side of the trail to allow for snow accumulation. The additional 8 feet will be thinned to 30 percent canopy closure in order to encourage huckleberry production. The total width of disturbance for the Nordic trails will be 41 feet. In addition, all of the existing Nordic trails will be planted with native species in order to narrow the trails and meet these same design features.

Overall, the Preferred Alternative will impact 19.0 acres of A11 lands (Winter Recreation Area) within the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort permit area, plus an additional 0.5 acres along Highway 35. This includes the acres of disturbance associated with the Twilight Parking Lot, Sunrise Maintenance Building, Twilight Parking Lot Equipment Maintenance Yard (Bus Shop), utility lines, access roads, and Nordic ski trail construction.

3.0. DECISION RATIONALE

Alternative 6 was developed as the Preferred Alternative after considering public involvement as well as the environmental consequences discussed in Chapter 3. The public involvement included the comments received during the scoping period, discussions during the field trip and conversations with individuals, organizations, the permittee, and government agencies. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) defines the agency's preferred alternative as: "the alternative which the agency believes will fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical and other factors" (CEQ 40 FAQs). I identified different components from the action alternatives to balance the need for action

with the two public issues (Nordic skiing and Master Plan consistency) and environmental consequences. Alternative 6 includes the Twilight Parking Lot analyzed in Alternative 2, replacement Nordic ski trails analyzed in Alternative 3, and Sunrise Maintenance Shop analyzed in Alternatives 4 and 5. The connected actions associated with the left- and right-turn lanes and utility lines are the same for all action alternatives, including Alternative 6.

I believe the actions associated with the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 6) meet the primary purpose of this project to serve the design capacity for parking, including area for snow storage, and maintenance facilities that was conceptually approved while minimizing environmental impacts from parking lot construction and maintenance, as was outlined in the Master Plan in 1997. Also, this alternative meets the underlying needs for action to provide additional parking within the MHM permit area; and to improve traffic flow and public and customer safety along the access routes as well as within the Main Parking Lot. The Preferred Alternative provides parking for an additional 878 vehicles and constructs a new maintenance shop that is not co-located with an existing parking lot. Lastly, the actions are entirely within the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort permit area and access road to the permit area.

I feel the Selected Alternative (Alternative 6) considered all comments received during the scoping period, field trip, and notice and comment period. The Selected Alternative balances the comments received from stakeholders along with the environmental consequences. Some of the comments that provoked the most discussion were related to Master Plan Consistency and Nordic skiing. And some of the environmental consequences that influenced the development of alternatives and my decision were related to water quality and Survey and Manage species.

- **Master Plan Consistency:** The Selected Alternative is inconsistent with the MHM Master Plan. The proposed Twilight Parking Lot is 9.4 acres including storm water management and snow storage, rather than 8 acres as described on page 10 of the Master Plan ROD. In addition, the Twilight Equipment Maintenance Yard (Bus Shop) includes another 2.5 acres of clearing. The total clearing associated with this alternative is 12.3 acres. This alternative includes an additional 4.3 acres of clearing for authorized parking that the amount discussed in the Master Plan ROD; this represents 0.12% of MHM permit area.

I selected a parking lot that is inconsistent with the Master Plan because this parking lot size addresses the long-term parking needs. On peak use days, the parking lots are totally full generally between 9:30 and 11:00. Antidotal evidence shows that approximately 250 cars are turned away on these peak days. These visitors have continued to attempt to find additional parking in other less desirable and potentially dangerous locations, such as alongside Highway 35 or FSR 3545. Based on the previous years, 440 cars parked along the access roads on peak days. Further, MHM has seen a steady increase in skier visits over the past ten seasons and managers anticipate this trend will continue at a slightly higher rate than the estimated population growth of the Portland metropolitan area. If visitation to MHM continues to increase as it has over the past ten year (approximately 3.4 percent per year), then the Forest Service may begin to see peak-use days reach maximum capacity of the proposed parking area in an estimated 10 to 15 years. Also, this alternative allows for the construction on a bus shop to further promote mass transit in the future. The Sunrise Maintenance Shop is less than the 3 acres described in the Master

Plan ROD on page 9, but it is not in the recommended location described on page 10. Although the recommended location was considered, it was not selected in order to minimize the acres of disturbance associated with the new building by co-locating it adjacent to the Sunrise Parking Lot. Also, this selected location has the least environmental impacts compared with the other action alternatives. The ROD does allow other locations to be considered, but notes that the advantages to the recommended site are: “it has been previously committed to development, provides easy access for grooming machines to the ski slopes, and represents an opportunity to provide a small area for employee parking.” The selected location does utilize an area previously committed to development, plus it minimizes the impacts to wetlands and Riparian Reserves while meeting the requirements of the Survey and Manage Record of Decision (see Section 4.3).

The site-specific environmental analysis may supersede the management direction provided in the Master Plan. This FEIS is the site-specific NEPA required by the Master Plan. As such, this ROD supersedes the related management direction and recommendations provided in the Master Plan ROD related to the parking lot expansion for Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement, including Forest Plan Amendment No. 10 (January 1997) as described on page 9 of the Master Plan ROD.

- **Nordic Skiing:** This alternative removes approximately 0.5 miles of Nordic ski trails. Portions of the Lower Hanel Loop Trail (intermediate), Little Loop trail (easiest), and Bear-grass Loop (easiest) will be affected. New Nordic trails will be constructed resulting in a net gain of 0.1 miles of additional Nordic ski trail. The easiest beginner trails are reduced by approximately 6 percent, while the intermediate trails are increased by 6 percent. Although the selected alternative impacts the Nordic ski trails more than other alternatives (Alternative 4 and 5), this location does not have any impacts to the Sahalie Falls Trail and does not require additional ground disturbance associated with the snow storage and storm water management (see Section 4.5).

Based on the comments received from the Nordic skiing community, two additional construction PDCs were added to the FEIS and Appendix 2 to direct the sequencing of the construction activities. PDC C-10 states: “The construction of the replacement Nordic ski trails will be completed the same year that the original trails are removed in order to allow for continuous use of the trails during the winter season.” Also, PDC C-11 states: “The new Nordic guest building will be completed within three years of project construction beginning.” These sequencing PDC will ensure that the Nordic skiing opportunities are continuous in the MHM Permit Area and no trails are closed for a season as a result of constructing the parking lot. As such, I believe this Selected Alternative addresses the Nordic skiing concerns expressed throughout the planning process while meeting the parking needs and minimizing the environmental consequences.

- **Other Concerns:** In addition to addressing these issues, the Selected Alternative minimizes the environmental consequences, especially compared to other alternatives. The location of the Twilight Parking Lot Sunrise Maintenance Shop minimizes the impacts to

water quality and Riparian Reserves. Alternative 6 only impacts 3.8 acres of Riparian Reserves; 2.8 acres of these acres are already located on disturbed ground. Also, the new Sunrise Vehicle Maintenance Shop in the Selected Alternative is not connected to the existing Sunrise Parking Lot. The shop and parking lot are not connected in order to minimize the changes associated with snow storage and storm water management associated with the Sunrise Parking Lot (see FEIS Section 3.4, Water Quality for more details on these effects). In addition, the Selected Alternative fully complies with Survey and Manage ROD (see Section 7.1) and does not require a persistence review for the Evening field slug.

This decision also incorporates the use of logs removed during construction to be used for restoration purposes on the Forest. PDC C-12 states: “Trees greater than 8-inches diameter breast height removed as part of parking lot and other infrastructure construction will be used primarily for watershed restoration projects on the Mt. Hood National Forest and adjoining lands. Trees will be limbed and bucked to 40-foot log lengths when possible. As many trees as possible, especially in the larger diameter classes, will be pulled over to retain the root wad as part of the 40-foot log. All logs slated for watershed restoration will be decked in locations accessible to log trucks for transport away from construction areas.” This will provide needed material for aquatics and wildlife restoration projects.

In conclusion, I believe that the Selected Alternative reflects the integration of effective land management objectives at a very high standard and fully meets the Purpose and Need for this project.

4.0. OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The FEIS considered 11 alternatives, six were analyzed in detail and five were considered, but eliminated from detailed study for the reasons stated in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.6. A detailed description of the four alternatives analyzed in detail can be found in the FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1-Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative; Section 2.2.2-Alternative 2 – Proposed Action; Section 2.2.3.-Alternative 3 – New Nordic Trails; Section 2.2.4-Alternative 4 – Elk Meadow Master Plan; Section 2.2.5-Alternative 5 – Elk Meadow; and, Section 2.2.6-Alternative 6 – Preferred Alternative . A comparison of these alternatives by Twilight Parking Lot features, Sunrise Maintenance Shop features, connection actions, purpose and need components, proposed action elements, overall impact and issues can be found in the FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.5. The six alternatives considered in detail are summarized below.

4.1. Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

The Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative (see FEIS, Section 2.2.1) represents the current conditions. In this alternative, none of the proposed parking improvements or connected actions associated with the Mt. Hood Meadows Parking Improvements Project would be constructed. On peak days and weekends, there would continue to be inadequate parking capacity at MHM. Parking capacity of MHM would remain unchanged at 2,647 vehicles. Winter recreationists accessing MHM would continue to park along access roads to both the Main Parking Lot (FSR 3555) and to the Hood Meadows Parking Lot (FSR 3545), Highway 35, as well as Sno-Parks

located near the Nordic ski trails along Highway 35. Traffic congestion would continue to exist due to northbound traffic on Highway 35 waiting for people to park along the Hood River Meadows access road (FSR 3545) and southbound traffic waiting to turn across the southbound lane onto the access road. Congestion created by the traffic would continue to limit access by emergency vehicles. Also, continued parking along the access roads and highway would continue to be unsafe for skiers walking along the roads to get to the shuttle bus pick-up locations.

Also, in this alternative, the industrial bus parking and vehicle maintenance functions would continue to be co-located with the Mt. Hood Meadows Main Parking Lot. The industrial buses would continue to be parked and serviced outside the maintenance facilities. Combining the industrial bus parking and vehicle maintenance functions with the public areas at the Main Parking Lot would continue to present safety concerns related to traffic flow and the maintenance activities outside the facilities. Further, the location of the current maintenance shop would continue to decrease potential parking capacity at the Main Parking lot.

Rationale: Under Alternative 1, traffic flow as well as public and customer safety along the access routes would not be improved. Further, this alternative would not serve the design capacity for parking, including area for snow storage, and maintenance facilities that was conceptually approved while minimizing environmental impacts from parking lot construction and maintenance, as was outlined in the Master Plan in 1997. As such, this alternative was not selected because it does not meet the purpose and need for action (see Section 1.2).

4.2. Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

Alternative 2, the Proposed Action (see FEIS, Section 2.2.2), was developed in response to proposals submitted by MHM in March 2009 and April 2011. A 7.2 acre parking lot for both downhill and Nordic customers at the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort would be constructed. The Twilight Parking Lot would be located east of the Elk Meadows trailhead and west of the ODOT maintenance yard with access via FSR 3545. In total, 9.4 acres would be cleared for this parking lot, snow storage, and a storm water facility. The overall parking capacity for MHM would be 3,526 vehicles, including the additional 878 vehicles from the Twilight Parking Lot.

Also, to improve parking capacity as well as customer safety, the vehicle maintenance functions would be moved away from the Mt. Hood Meadows Main Parking Lot and located on the north side of the existing Sunrise Parking Lot. The new Sunrise Vehicle Maintenance Shop would be approximately 65 by 150 feet in size and constructed on 1.75 acres. The Proposed Action also includes constructing the Twilight Parking Lot equipment maintenance yard (bus shop), constructing the associated access road, and constructing a Nordic guest services building. Lastly, the connected actions associated with this alternative are: installing utility lines (power, water, sewer and telephone) to service the new facilities; constructing left and right turn lanes from Highway 35 to FSR 3545; restoring an impacted wetland; and, constructing Nordic ski trails. Each of these actions is described more fully in FEIS, Section 2.2.2.

Overall, the Proposed Action would impact 17.6 acres of A11 lands within the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort permit area, plus an additional 0.5 acres along Highway 35. This includes the acres of disturbance associated with the Twilight Parking Lot, Sunrise Maintenance Building, Twilight Parking Lot equipment maintenance yard (bus shop), utility lines, access road, and Nordic ski trail construction.

Rationale: The Twilight Parking Lot included in this alternative was carried forward into the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 6) because it best addressed the underlying need for additional parking within the MHM permit area while minimizing the environmental consequences. See Section 3.0, Decision Rationale for more information regarding this decision.

The Sunrise Maintenance Shop for this alternative has risk of increased sedimentation due to snow removal limitations in the Sunrise Parking Lot footprint posed by the new Sunrise Vehicle Maintenance Shop. Other action alternatives (Alternatives 4, 5 and 6) have a lower impact to water quality. Co-locating the new maintenance shop with an existing parking lot also may create safety concerns in the future similar to the current situation in the Main Parking Lot. Also, the Nordic ski trails in this alternative did not address the Issue 2: Nordic Skiing well. Although there was no net loss in trail mileage, the ski trails were not replaced in-kind. The replacement trails were straight, uniform terrain and the outer loop was no longer continuous. As such, this alternative was not selected because of the impacts to water quality and Nordic ski trails.

4.3. Alternative 3 – New Nordic Trails Alternative

Alternative 3 was designed to address Issue 2: Nordic Skiing (see FEIS, Section 1.7.1) in order to create a similar Nordic skiing experience as the existing conditions. This alternative includes the construction of 7.5 additional acres of parking for both downhill and Nordic customers at the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort. The Twilight Parking Lot would be in the same location as Alternative 2. This parking lot, however, does not have linear edges in order to reduce the visual impacts associated with the new parking lot. In total, 13.8 acres would be cleared for this parking lot, snow storage, and a storm water facility. The overall parking capacity for MHM would be 3,526 vehicles, including the additional 878 vehicles from the Twilight Parking Lot.

In Alternative 3, the proposed Sunrise Vehicle Maintenance Shop to the location recommended in the Master Plan. The new maintenance shop would be approximately 65 by 150 feet in size and constructed on 2.4 acres. This alternative also includes constructing the Twilight Parking Lot equipment maintenance yard (bus shop), constructing the associated access road, and constructing a Nordic guest services building. Lastly, the connected actions associated with this alternative are: installing utility lines (power, water, sewer and telephone) to service the new facilities; constructing left and right turn lanes from Highway 35 to FSR 3545; restoring an impacted wetland; and, constructing Nordic ski trails. Each of these actions is described more fully in FEIS, Section 2.2.3.

Overall, Alternative 3 would impact 24.2 acres of A11 lands (Winter Recreation Area) within the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort permit area, plus as additional 0.5 acres along Highway 35. This includes the acres of disturbance associated with the Twilight Parking Lot, Sunrise Maintenance Building, Twilight Parking Lot Equipment Maintenance Yard (Bus Shop), utility lines, access roads, and Nordic ski trail construction.

Rationale: The connected action of replacement Nordic ski trails included in this alternative was carried forward into the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 6) because it best addressed Issue 2: Nordic Skiing. See Section 3.0, Decision Rationale for more information regarding this decision.

The primary difference in the Twilight Park Lot proposed under this alternative and Alternative 6 is the non-linear edges of the parking lot. These non-linear edges were developed to address visual quality impacts; however, these impacts were the same for all action alternatives regardless of the parking lot shape or size (see FEIS, Section 3.11). Also, the effects associated with edge habitat for huckleberries (FEIS, Section 3.10) and deer and elk habitat (FEIS, Section 3.7) were the same when compared to similar size parking lot proposal (Alternative 2 and 6). Also, the Sunrise Maintenance Shop in this alternative is located adjacent to the administrative building as proposed in the Mt. Hood Meadows Master Plan. Evening field slugs were found in only one location when surveying in and around the locations for the action alternatives. The location of the Sunrise Maintenance Building for this alternative is within the protection buffer of the evening field slugs. For this alternative to move forward, a species persistence review would be required through the Regional Office in order to fully comply with the Survey and Manage ROD (2001). Further, this location has some risk of increasing water temperature, sediment and chemical contaminants due to the close proximity to a wetland/stream and complete removal of approximately 400 linear feet of riparian vegetation. As such, this alternative was not selected because of the similarity to the Selected Alternative (parking lot) as well as impacts to Survey and Manage species and water quality (maintenance building).

4.4. Alternative 4 – Elk Meadows Master Plan

Alternative 4 was designed to address Issue 1: Master Plan Consistency as well as Issue 2: Nordic Skiing (see FEIS, Section 1.7.1). This alternative was designed to be fully consistent with the Master Plan. It also moves the proposed parking lot location to minimize impacts to the existing Nordic ski trails. The Twilight Parking Lot would be located between the Sahalie Falls and Elk Meadows trails and existing Nordic ski trails. This alternative moves the parking lot location to minimize impacts to the existing Nordic ski trails. In total, 8.0 acres would be cleared for this parking lot, snow storage, and a storm water facility. The overall parking capacity for MHM would be 3,245 vehicles, including the additional 598 vehicles from the Twilight Parking Lot. The Twilight Parking Lot Equipment Maintenance Yard (Bus Shop) would not be constructed under this alternative.

In Alternative 4, the new Sunrise Vehicle Maintenance Shop would not be connected to the existing Sunrise parking lot. The location was changed compared to Alternative 2 in order to minimize the changes associated with snow storage and storm water management associated with the Sunrise Parking Lot (see FEIS Section 3.4, Water Quality for more details on these effects). The shop building would be approximately 65 by 150 feet in size and constructed on 2.5 acres. This alternative also includes constructing the associated access road and a Nordic guest services building. Lastly, the connected actions associated with this alternative are: installing utility lines (power, water, sewer and telephone) to service the new facilities; constructing left and right turn lanes from Highway 35 to FSR 3545; restoring an impacted wetland; and, constructing Nordic ski trails. Each of these actions is described more fully in FEIS, Section 2.2.4.

Overall, Alternative 4 would impact 11.1 acres of A11 lands (Winter Recreation Area) within the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort permit area, plus an additional 0.5 acres along Highway 35. This includes the acres of disturbance associated with the Twilight Parking Lot, Sunrise Maintenance Building, Twilight Parking Lot Equipment Maintenance Yard (Bus Shop), utility lines, access roads, Nordic ski trail construction, and Sahalie Falls trail re-route.

Rationale: The location of the Sunrise Maintenance Shop included in this alternative was carried forward into the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 6) because it minimized the environmental consequences associated with the new location. See Section 3.0, Decision Rationale for more information regarding this decision.

The Twilight Parking Lot proposed under this alternative addresses Issue 1: Consistency with Master Plan by reducing the size of the parking lot and associated snow storage and storm water management to 8.0 acres as proposed in the Mt. Hood Meadows Master Plan. Based on these size requirements, the parking lot does not include an associated bus shop and only accommodates 598 additional cars. Although this would address the immediate needs to provide additional parking within the MHM permit area and to improve public and customer safety along the access roads, it is not anticipated to address the long-term need. Based on the previous years, 440 cars parked along the access roads on peak days, leaving parking for approximately 200 additional cars in the future. MHM has seen a steady increase in skier visits over the past ten seasons and managers anticipate this trend will continue at a slightly higher rate than the estimated population growth of the Portland metropolitan area. Based on these projections, the parking lots would reach capacity in 6 to 10 years. Further, the Master Plan only provides general direction for future development at MHM and site-specific NEPA is required to implement any actions presented in the Master Plan. Due to the reduced size of the parking lot, this alternative does not impact any of the existing Nordic ski trails. Although this alternative addresses the issues, it was not selected because it does not address the long-term need to provide additional parking, nor does it allow for the construction of the new bus shop to further promote the use of the mass transit.

4.5. Alternative 5 – Elk Meadows

Alternative 5 addresses Issue 2: Nordic Skiing (see FEIS, Section 1.7.1) by moving the proposed parking lot location, but it more closely resembles the initial proposals submitted by MHM in overall parking capacity. The size of the parking lot is increased to 6.8 acres to accommodate both downhill and Nordic customers at the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort. In total, 11.3 acres would be cleared for this parking lot, snow storage, and a storm water facility. The overall parking capacity for MHM would be 3,477 vehicles, including the additional 830 vehicles from the Twilight Parking Lot.

In Alternative 5, the new Sunrise Vehicle Maintenance Shop is the same as Alternative 4. This alternative also includes constructing the Twilight Parking Lot equipment maintenance yard (bus shop), constructing the associated access road, and constructing a Nordic guest services building. Lastly, the connected actions associated with this alternative are: installing utility lines (power, water, sewer and telephone) to service the new facilities; constructing left and right turn lanes from Highway 35 to FSR 3545; restoring an impacted wetland; and, constructing Nordic ski trails. Each of these actions is described more fully in FEIS, Section 2.2.5.

Overall, Alternative 5 would impact 17.6 acres of A11 lands (Winter Recreation Area) within the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort permit area, plus an additional 0.5 acres along Highway 35. This includes the acres of disturbance associated with the Twilight Parking Lot, Sunrise Maintenance Building, Twilight Parking Lot Equipment Maintenance Yard (Bus Shop), utility lines, access roads, and Nordic ski trail construction.

Rationale: The location of the Sunrise Maintenance Shop included in this alternative was carried forward into the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 6) because it minimized the environmental consequences associated with the new location. See Section 3.0, Decision Rationale for more information regarding this decision.

The location of Twilight Parking Lot proposed under this alternative was moved to minimize the impacts to the existing Nordic ski trails and address Issue 2: Nordic Skiing. Only 0.2 miles of Nordic ski trails would be impacted, compared to 0.7 miles in Alternative 6. Given the location of the parking lot, the size of the parking lot was decreased while the area needed for the snow storage and storm water management clearing was increased. As such, this location resulted in a 14.4 acres compared to 13.2 acres associated with Alternative 6. Further, this location overlaps with the Sahalie Falls Trail (FS Trail #667c), resulting in a re-route around the proposed parking lot to provide screening. Although this alternative addresses the Nordic skiing issue, it was not selected because of the impacts to the Sahalie Falls Trail; additional ground disturbance associated with the snow storage and storm water management; and relatively small difference in impacted Nordic ski trails (0.5 miles).

5.0. ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In accordance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, I am required to identify the alternative or alternatives that can be considered environmentally preferable (40 CFR Part 1505.2 (b)). The environmentally preferable alternative is defined by CEQ as the alternative that promotes national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA Section 101. The environmental preferable alternative is not necessarily the alternative that will be implemented, but is ordinarily the alternative that causes the least damage to the physical and biological environment, and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources. For this project, I believe Alternative 4 is the environmentally preferable alternative because it has the fewest acres of new paved surfaces (8.4 acres), fewest acres of forested land removed (9.4 acres), and fewest acres impacted (11.6 acres).

6.0. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement has occurred throughout the NEPA process. The project was included in the quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions distributed by the Forest since April 2010. Information on the proposal was posted on a project website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=26954>) beginning at that time.

A Notice of Intent (NOI) requesting public comment was published in the Federal Register (Vol. 76, No. 131) on July 8, 2011. A scoping letter was mailed to approximately 70 individuals, organizations, agencies, businesses, recreational residence owners, and local and tribal governments in July 2011. The Forest Service received approximately 28 comments through this process. The comments were from a variety of organizations and individuals, including ski associations (Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Association and NW Ski Club Council); environmental organizations (Bark and Crag Law Center); non-profit organizations (Friends of Mount Hood and Mount Hood National Park Campaign); federal, state and local government agencies (National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency and Oregon Department of Transportation); tribal government (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs); and 17 individuals.

A trip field was held at the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort on September 28, 2012 to review options on-the-ground. Sixteen individuals attended the field trip in addition to Forest Service personnel. The individuals represented environmental groups (Oregon Wild); non-profit organizations (Mazamas and Friends of Mount Hood); ski organizations (Oregon Nordic Club and Mt. Hood Meadows); and individuals.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) announcing the comment period was published in the Federal Register (Vol. 78, No. 86) on May 3, 2013. A legal notice announcing the availability of the Mt. Hood Meadows Parking Lot Improvements Draft Environmental Impact Statement for review and comment was published in *The Oregonian* (newspaper of record) on May 4, 2013. The 45-day comment period ended on June 17, 2013. Sixteen individuals and organizations submitted written comments within the comment period. The comments were received from individuals, Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Association, Oregon Department of Transportation, Crag Law Center, Friends of Mount Hood, Oregon Wild, Oregon Nordic Club, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Substantive comments received are summarized along with Forest Service responses in Appendix B of the FEIS. Appendix C of the FEIS contains comment letters received from government agencies in their entirety as per FSH 1909.15. All public comments and mailing lists are available in the project file, located in the Hood River District Ranger's Office in Mt. Hood/Parkdale, Oregon.

7.0. FINDINGS REQUIRED BY LAWS AND REGULATIONS

After consideration of the discussion of environmental consequences (FEIS, Chapter 3), I have determined that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the Forest Plan, as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan. Also, I have determined that the Selected Alternative is consistent with other laws and regulations, as outlined in the FEIS.

7.1. Consistency with National Forest Management Act

I find that the Selected Alternative as described in this ROD and accompanying FEIS is in compliance with the relevant management requirements set forth in **the National Forest Management Act** (36 CFR 219), including the management direction found in the **Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan**, as amended. It is consistent with standards and guidelines specific to the relevant land allocation and it is consistent with the applicable Forestwide standards and guidelines. Each resource section in the FEIS, Chapter 3 discusses consistency with the Forest Plan and Northwest Forest Plan. Additionally, I find that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the major amendments to the Forest Plan as described below.

- I find that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the **Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines** (FEIS, Section 3-5, Aquatics; FEIS, Section 3-7, Wildlife and FEIS, Section 3.8, Botany), including all survey protocols. Two aquatic Survey and Manage mollusk species (Columbia duskysnail and Basalt Juga) were considered in this environmental analysis. Neither of these species, both known to

occur elsewhere on the Forest, resides in the affected environment. See FEIS, Section 3-5 for more information.

Two wildlife Survey and Manage wildlife species (great gray owl and evening field slug) were considered in this analysis. Since great gray owls hunt by perching in trees or snags, tree removal will reduce the number of trees available for perching. If great gray owls are present they will likely be nesting in the lower elevations of the project area, where higher quality nesting habitat is located. Also, great gray owls are sensitive to human presence, so the disturbance associated with the action alternatives construction activities could temporarily displace nesting birds and potentially impact no more than one breeding pair for one nesting season. As such, the Selected Alternative *may impact individuals, but is not likely to impact populations, nor contribute to a potential loss of viability of this species*. Surveys were conducted and key habitat requirements (perennially wet meadow areas with down logs or rock refugia) for the evening field slug were absent. Also, the wetland that is impacted through the creation of the turn lanes is considered non-habitat because it is located in a disturbed area that continues to be impacted with gravel and other road maintenance each year. As such, the Selected Alternative has *no impact* on evening field slugs. See FEIS, Section 3-7 for more information.

There is suitable late-successional forest habitat for Survey and Manage Category B fungi (19 species) that will be impacted by proposed project activities, if species are present. Approximately 10.7 acres of late-successional forested habitat will be removed and converted to non-forested land. Although loss of forested acres under the Selected Alternative will further impact habitat connectivity for fungal species, if they are present in the analysis area, they are most likely present in existing undisturbed forests surrounding the immediate area (and throughout the Mt. Hood Meadows Permit Area) and also in similar elevation late-successional and old-growth forests in reserve areas around the upper slopes of Mt. Hood (Stringer Meadows Special Interest Botanic Area, upper East Fork Watershed, Mt. Hood Wilderness, upper west portions of the Badger Wilderness, and the upper northeast reaches of the White River Wild and Scenic River area). As such, the Selected Alternative *may impact individuals, but is not likely to impact populations, nor contribute to a potential loss of viability of this species or trend toward Federal listing*. See FEIS, Section 3-8 for more information.

- I find that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the **Aquatic Conservation Strategy** (ACS). The Selected Alternative will maintain all nine ACS objectives (FEIS, Section 3.6 and Table 3-60) through PDC (FEIS, Section 2.3) and Best Management Practices (FEIS, Appendix A) as well as the location of the Sunrise Maintenance Building. I have also considered the existing condition of riparian reserves, including the important physical and biological components of the fifth-field watersheds and the effects to riparian resources. Finally, I considered the relevant information from the East and Middle Forks Hood River Watershed Analysis (1996).

I find that the Selected Alternative is consistent with riparian reserve standards and guidelines (FEIS, Section 3.4.4). The Selected Alternative will disturb 3.8 acres of riparian reserves with 2.9 acres associated with the Left- and Right-turn lanes, 0.5

acres associated with the Twilight Parking Lot with associated access road and bus shop, 0.1 acres associated with Sunrise Vehicle Maintenance Shop, and 0.3 acres associated with the utility corridors. Of these acres, 2.5 acres are already within the disturbed footprint of Highway 35 and 0.3 acres are already located in utility corridors. As such, the Selected Alternative will only further impact 1.0 acre of riparian reserves. The impacts to riparian reserves are fully described in FEIS, Section 3.4.

- By considering the prevention of invasive plant introduction, establishment and spread of invasive plants (FEIS, Section 3.9), the planning process is consistent with the **Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Program Preventing and Managing Invasive Plants Record of Decision issued in 2005 and the Site-Specific Invasive Plant Treatments for Mt. Hood National Forest and Columbia Gorge Scenic Area in Oregon Record of Decision issued in 2008**. Project Design Criteria/Mitigation Measures are included to prevent the spread and establishment of invasive plants (see Appendix 2).

Further, I find that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the Forest Plan and Regional direction on management indicator species and sensitive species.

- I have considered the impacts to **management indicator species (MIS)** as disclosed in the FEIS (Section 3-5, Aquatics and Section 3-7, Wildlife). Aquatic MIS within the project area include cutthroat trout. Cutthroat trout are the only fish species known to reside in Meadows Creek and they are found from the mouth upstream to the end of a large wet meadow complex at river mile 2.5, well upstream of the affected environment. Wildlife MIS within the project area include the northern spotted owl, mule deer and elk, and American marten. The construction activities will have a short-term impact on these species. Habitat will remain within and adjacent to the Permit Area for these species. As such, I find that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the standards and guidelines pertaining to MIS. Also, based on the limited effects to any MIS, the Selected Alternative does not contribute towards a negative trend in viability on the Forest.
- I have considered the impacts **Regional Forester's Sensitive Species** list for aquatic, wildlife and botanical species as disclosed in the EA (FEIS, Section 3-5, Aquatics; FEIS, Section 3-7, Wildlife and FEIS, Section 3.8, Botany). All resource areas used the Region 6 Regional Forester's 2011 Sensitive Species list for this analysis. The Selected Alternative will have no significant adverse effects to sensitive species. The project will not jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species nor will it cause a trend to federal listing or loss of viability for these species.

Barren Juga, Purple-lipped Juga, The Dalles Juga, Scott's Apatanian caddisfly, and another caddisfly with no common name are the aquatic sensitive species present in the project area. Based on survey results, none of the R6 sensitive mollusks reside within streams in the affected environment. Although not found, Scott's Apatanian caddisfly was assumed to be present in the project area because of habitat availability. Potential effects center on potential disturbance and increased sedimentation resulting from left- and right-turn lanes construction in all action alternatives. As such, the Selected Alternative *may impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species*. See FEIS, Section 3.5 for more information.

The Peregrine falcon, western bumblebee and wolverine are the three wildlife sensitive species present in the project area. Wolverines are highly sensitive to human presence, the disturbance associated with the connected actions of all alternatives could temporarily displace foraging wolverines; however, because of the existing recreation at MHM, it is unlikely that wolverine are denning in the project area. Similarly, Peregrine falcons are sensitive to human presence, so the disturbance associated with the actions of all alternatives could temporarily disturb nesting birds. Potential disruption will only take place during construction activities and potentially impact no more than one breeding pair for one breeding season. No nesting habitat will be directly impacted by the Selected Alternative and there will continue to be sufficient foraging habitat adjacent to the project area within the territory of a nesting pair. Lastly, the Selected Alternative will permanently remove potential habitat that will impact bumblebees (14 acres of new paved surface). The acres of paved area will remove potential nesting, foraging and over wintering habitat. The loss of edges where bumblebees have an opportunity to forage on different flowering species will potentially impact bumblebees. As such, the Selected Alternative *may impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species* for all wildlife sensitive species. See FEIS, Section 3.7 for more information.

Lastly, whitebark pine is the botanical sensitive species within the project area. Under the Selected Alternative construction of the new Sunrise Maintenance Shop will convert between 2.3 acres of forest to a non-forested opening which will be maintained as such for the facility. Although Whitebark pine individuals will be impacted (cut) during construction, the species is not expected to persist in the forest as it evolves because of the habitat type. As such, the Selected Alternative *may impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species*. See FEIS, Section 3.8 for more information.

7.2. Consistency with National Environmental Policy Act

Regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1500 to 1508; FSH 1909.15) were followed in preparing this EIS. The range of alternatives was adequate to understand and analyze significant public issues. The Selected Alternative adopts all practical means to avoid and/or minimize adverse effects to the environment. The PDC, as described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.4, describes the measures the U.S. Forest Service expects to take to further reduce the risk of adverse effects during implementation.

I am choosing the Selected Alternative given the consideration of cumulative effects addressed throughout FEIS, Chapter 3. The projects considered in the cumulative effects analysis are listed in FEIS, Table 3-1. This is consistent with the Guidance on Consideration of Past Actions in Cumulative Effects Analysis provided by the Council on Environmental Quality (June 24, 2005).

7.3. Consistency with Endangered Species Act, as amended and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

The Selected Alternative complies with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 for aquatic and wildlife species. The project area contains one threatened wildlife species and critical habitat for one threatened aquatic species. No threatened, endangered or proposed botanical species are present in the project area. All required consultation has been completed as described below.

Critical habitat for steelhead trout includes the East Fork Hood River up to Sahalie Falls and Meadows Creek from the mouth up to Highway 35. Therefore, steelhead critical habitat is located in the Meadows Creek portion of the affected environment. This critical habitat in Meadows Creek is unoccupied by steelhead. There are no federally proposed or listed fish species that reside in the affected environment. The increased fine sediment expected from the left-turn lane construction will not measurably diminish the quality or quantity of spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead trout; therefore, this action will not result in the destruction or adverse modification of steelhead critical habitat and effects determination is *no effect*. Since the construction of the Highway 35 left-turn lane will not result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat further consultation/coordination with NOAA Fisheries is not required. Because bull trout and bull trout critical habitat are not present in the affected environment coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not required. See FEIS, Section 3.5 for more information.

Northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) surveys were completed for the project area. A spotted owl was detected in the project area; follow-up surveys were completed, but the nest was never located. The effects determination for disturbance for this project is **May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect (NLAA)** northern spotted owls since all construction activities will take place outside the disruption distance for noise. Due to the proximity of the proposed activities to the known spotted owl nest site, the effects to suitable habitat are **May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect (LAA)** due to the degradation and removal of suitable habitat within the home range and core area for a known northern spotted owl. Even though this owl habitat lacks the structural components that provide for nest sites, the foraging habitat in this home range is considered high quality and is likely providing enough habitat to support spotted owl survival and reproduction. The combined suitable and foraging habitat is approximately 67 percent in the core area and 51 percent in the home range and will not change after implementation of the proposed project. Although the habitat removal will result in a LAA determination for impacts to spotted owl, enough habitat will be maintained for survival and reproduction of this pair. As such, enough suitable habitat remains that take on the owl pair is not warranted. Formal consultation with FWS was completed as part of the programmatic consultation entitled “Biological Opinion and Conference Opinion Regarding the Effects of Habitat Modification Activities of Northern Spotted Owls (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) and it’s Critical Habitat, and Proposed Critical Habitat within the Willamette Province, FY 2013” (FWS Reference Number: 01EOW00-2012-F-0158). See FEIS, Section 3.7 for more information.

The **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA)**, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-267), established procedures designed to identify, conserve, and enhance essential fish habitat (EFH) for those species regulated under a Federal fisheries management plan. The Selected Alternative will not adversely affect any essential

fish habitat as it is not present in the affected environment (FEIS, Section 3.5.4). As such, I find this project to be consistent with MSA.

7.4. Consistency with Other Laws and Regulations

My decision is consistent with all other current laws, regulations and policies guiding management activities on National Forest System lands. This includes, but is not limited to: National Historic Preservation Act; Clean Water Act; and Executive Orders 11988, 11990 and 12898. Specific findings and rationales required by law follow.

7.4.1. Consistency with National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Protection Act both require consideration be given to the potential effect of federal undertakings on historic resources, (including historic and protohistoric cultural resource sites). The guidelines for assessing effects and for consultation are provided in 36 CFR 800. To implement these guidelines, in 2004, Region 6 of the Forest Service entered a Programmatic Agreement (PA) with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

The proposed activities of the MHM project include tree removal, slash burning, utility line installation, grading and construction that involve heavy machinery and ground disturbance. In accordance with the 2004 agreement, heritage resource surveys have been conducted for those ground disturbing activities requiring inspection and documented in Heritage Resource Report 2012/060606/0005 (Dryden 2012). The surveys included all alternatives proposed for this project, and also included additional alternatives eventually dropped from further consideration. Also in accordance with the 2004 agreement, a site evaluation was documented in Heritage Resource Report 2012/060606/0006 (Dryden 2012).

The recommended protective measures will adequately protect the known heritage resources. The site protection measures were developed on the Mt. Hood National Forest to be consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act and adapted for use across the forest. The Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer has concurred that the previous use of these methods will result in no effect to heritage resources. Contracts will contain provisions for the protection of sites found during project activities. Based on the proposed protective measures, the project meets the criteria in the Programmatic Agreement for “Historic Properties Avoided” determination (Stipulation III (B) 2). As such, I find that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the **National Historic Presentation Action** and all consultation requirements have been met (FEIS, Section 3.10 and FEIS, Section 4.1.3).

7.4.2. Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act of 1948 (as amended in 1972 and 1987) establishes as federal policy the control of point and non-point pollution and assigns the States the primary responsibility for control of water pollution. Compliance with the Clean Water Act by National Forests in Oregon is achieved under State Law. Water temperature data has been collected on Mitchell Creek and the East Fork Hood River since 1992 and Meadows Creek in 2001 through 2005. All of these stream

temperatures are below State of Oregon water quality standards of 64.4oF for the 7-day average maximum (salmon and trout rearing and migration). The primary shade zone is maintained in all the activities in the Selected Alternative, so no change in existing stream temperatures is anticipated. Also, the location of the Sunrise Maintenance Shop is far away from Mitchell Creek (over 500-feet) and the East Fork Hood River (300-feet) so PDC and Best Management Practices (BMP) that include treatment of stormwater will effectively keep all this material out of surface water. Further, all actions within the Selected Alternative (except the left- and right-turn lanes) have low connectivity with surface water. Based on this analysis, I find that the selected alternative is consistent with the **Clean Water Act**. See FEIS, Sections 3.4 for more information.

7.4.3. Clean Air Act

The **Clean Air Act** was enacted in 1963, with major amendments occurring in 1977 (Prevention of Significant Deterioration), 1990 (Title V Operating Permits), and 1999 (Regional Haze Rule). The Clean Air Act is the comprehensive federal law that regulates air emissions from stationary and mobile sources. Among other things, this law authorizes Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS) to protect public health and public welfare and to regulate emissions of hazardous air pollutants. FEIS, Section 3.13 documents a thorough analysis of the Selected Alternative's potential impacts on air quality, including compliance with AAQS.

A short-term impacts to air quality will occur during construction. These activities will occur during the summer months once snow has left the construction areas. Impacts include fugitive dust, construction vehicle exhaust, and emissions from slash burning. These impacts will only occur during construction of the proposed project. No exceedence of Federal or State AAQS is expected from the operation of construction vehicles (including exhaust and fugitive dust generation) due to the temporary and intermittent duration of earth moving activities, compounded with the high moisture content of the soils in the project area. As such, I find that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the Clean Air Act.

7.4.4. Executive Orders 11988 and 11990: Flood Plains and Wetlands

Floodplains are areas within the riparian areas of Class 1, 2, and 3 streams, and vary from only a few feet, to the entire riparian area in width. Wetlands are areas that regularly are saturated by surface or ground water and subsequently are characterized by a prevalence of vegetation that is adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Executive Order 11988 – Protection of Floodplains: Due to the steepness of the topography, small stream size and confined nature of streams in this area, floodplain width is fairly limited. The 100-year floodplain on all first order tributaries is estimated to be less than 15 feet wide in general. On East Fork Hood River, the 100-year floodplain is estimated to be generally less than 30 feet wide, while Meadows and Mitchell Creek are about 20 feet wide. The only work proposed to occur in a floodplain area is the left turn lane that crosses Meadows Creek. As stated in Section 3.4, most of this project will be located in a footprint that has already been disturbed and this project includes numerous BMP and PDC aimed at reducing degradation to physical stream channel characteristics. In addition, a new culvert will be installed prior to construction of the left turn lane that is larger in diameter and will allow more natural stream and floodplain processes to occur. See FEIS, Sections 3.4 for more information.

Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands: The proposed right turn lane included in all alternatives will remove less than an acre of wetlands located immediately adjacent to Highway 35. To mitigate this loss of wetland, a new wetland will be created in approximately the same location relative to the newly constructed right-turn lane. As a result, there will be no net loss in wetlands. All action alternatives will impact a small wetland immediately adjacent to Highway 35. FEIS, Sections 3.4, Water Quality and FEIS, Section 3.5, Aquatics provide a full analysis of the impacts associated with these actions.

As documented in FEIS, Section 3.4, Water Quality, none of the other proposed activities are located in designated wetlands. Wetland mapping efforts have been completed by consultants hired by Mt. Hood Meadows as well as Forest Service specialists. All of the action alternatives do propose some level of entry into Riparian Reserves adjacent to wetlands. This is due to site limitations, and the incursions were avoided where possible. PDC and BMP aimed at reducing or eliminating potential detrimental effects to water quality are included with this project. The Selected Alternative protects water quality to adjacent wetlands.

7.4.5. Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice

Executive Order #12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, directs Federal agencies to address effects accruing in a disproportionate way to minority and low income populations. One goal of Executive Order 12898 is to provide, to the greatest extent practicable, the opportunity for minority and low-income populations to participate in planning, analysis, and decision-making that affects their health or environment, including identification of program needs and designs. The Executive Order makes clear its provisions apply full to programs involving Native Americans.

Analysis for this proposed action has been conducted according to CEQ's *Environmental Justice - Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act*. The proposed action, its purpose and need and area of potential effect have been clearly defined. Ongoing consultation with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs is ongoing (see FEIS, Chapter 4). Also, in accordance with Forest Service and BLM policy, contracting procedures will ensure that projects made available to contractors will be advertised and awarded in a manner that give proper consideration to minority and women-owned business groups.

The Selected Alternative does not appear to have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on minority or low income populations, or Native American Tribes. The Selected Alternative does not have disproportionately high or adverse human health effects, high or adverse environmental effects, substantial environmental hazard, or affects to differential patterns of consumption of natural resources. Scoping and other public involvement did not reveal any issues or concerns associated with the principles of Environmental Justice. No PDC to offset or ameliorate adverse effects to these populations have been identified. All interested and affected parties will continue to be involved with the comment and decision making process.

8.0. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

Section 428 of The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 included a provision establishing a pre-decisional objection process (36CFR218) for projects and activities implementing land management plans in lieu of the post-decisional appeal process (36CFR215) used by the agency since 1993. Since this project is a non-fuels reduction act (HFRA) project, it is subject to the Project-Level Pre-decisional Administrative Review Process (Objection process) as identified in 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B.

Rather than being able to seek higher-level review of unresolved concerns after a project decision has been made (Appeal process), those who are eligible will be able to seek that review before the project decision has been signed (Objection process). The Forest Service believes that considering public concerns before a decision is made aligns with our collaborative approach to public land management and increases the likelihood of resolving those concerns resulting in better, more informed decisions. We also believe this will aid in our efforts to be more efficient with documenting environmental effects (NEPA).

Individuals and entities (non-governmental organizations, businesses, partnerships, state and local governments, Alaska Native Corporations, and Indian Tribes) who have submitted timely, specific written comments regarding a proposed project or activity during any designated opportunity for public comment may file an objection. Opportunity for public comment on an Environmental Impact Statement includes during scoping, the 45 day public review period, or any other instance where the Responsible Official seeks written comments.

Written comments are those submitted to the Responsible Official or designee during a designated opportunity for public participation provided for a proposed project. Specific written comments should be within the scope of the Proposed Action, have a direct relationship to the Proposed Action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider.

The Objection Reviewing Officer for this project is the Mt. Hood National Forest, Forest Supervisor. An objection should be addressed to the Forest Supervisor at any of the following addresses. For postal delivery, mail to:

Forest Supervisor, Objection Reviewing Officer
Mt. Hood National Forest
16400 Champion Way, Sandy OR 97055.

The street location for those submitting hand-delivered objection is the same as listed above. The office hours are 7:30-4:30 M-F (closed 11:30 to 12:30), excluding holidays. For fax, send to Forest Supervisor, Attn: Objections to 503-668-1413. Email: objections-pnw-mthood@fs.fed.us. Electronic appeals must be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf), or portable document format (.pdf) only. E-mails submitted to email addresses other than the one listed above, or in formats other than those listed, or containing viruses, will be rejected. It is the responsibility of the appellant to confirm receipt of appeals submitted by electronic mail.

The objection, including attachments, must be postmarked or received by the Objection Reviewing Officer within 45 days of the date that this decision is published in *The Oregonian*. For further information regarding objection procedures, contact Jennie O'Connor Card at 406-522-2537 or Nancy Lankford at 503-668-1663.

9.0. IMPLEMENTATION DATE

If no objection is filed, implementation may begin on, but not before, the 5th business day following the close of the 45-day objection period. If an objection is filed, implementation may occur immediately following the date of final decision.

10.0. CONTACT

For additional information concerning this draft decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement, contact Jennie O'Connor Card, Mt. Hood Meadows Parking Improvements EIS Team Leader, Mt. Hood National Forest: (406) 522-2537 (phone) or jennieoconnorcard@fs.fed.us. You may also contact Claire Pitner, Eastside Recreation Staff, Mt. Hood National Forest: 6780 Highway 35 Mount Hood-Parkdale, OR 97041; (541) 352-1248 (phone); 541-352-7365 (fax); or cpitner@fs.fed.us. Additional information also is available on the project website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/projects>.



APPENDIX 1: MAPS FOR SELECTED ALTERNATIVE



Figure 1: Overview Map for Alternative 6 – Preferred Alternative

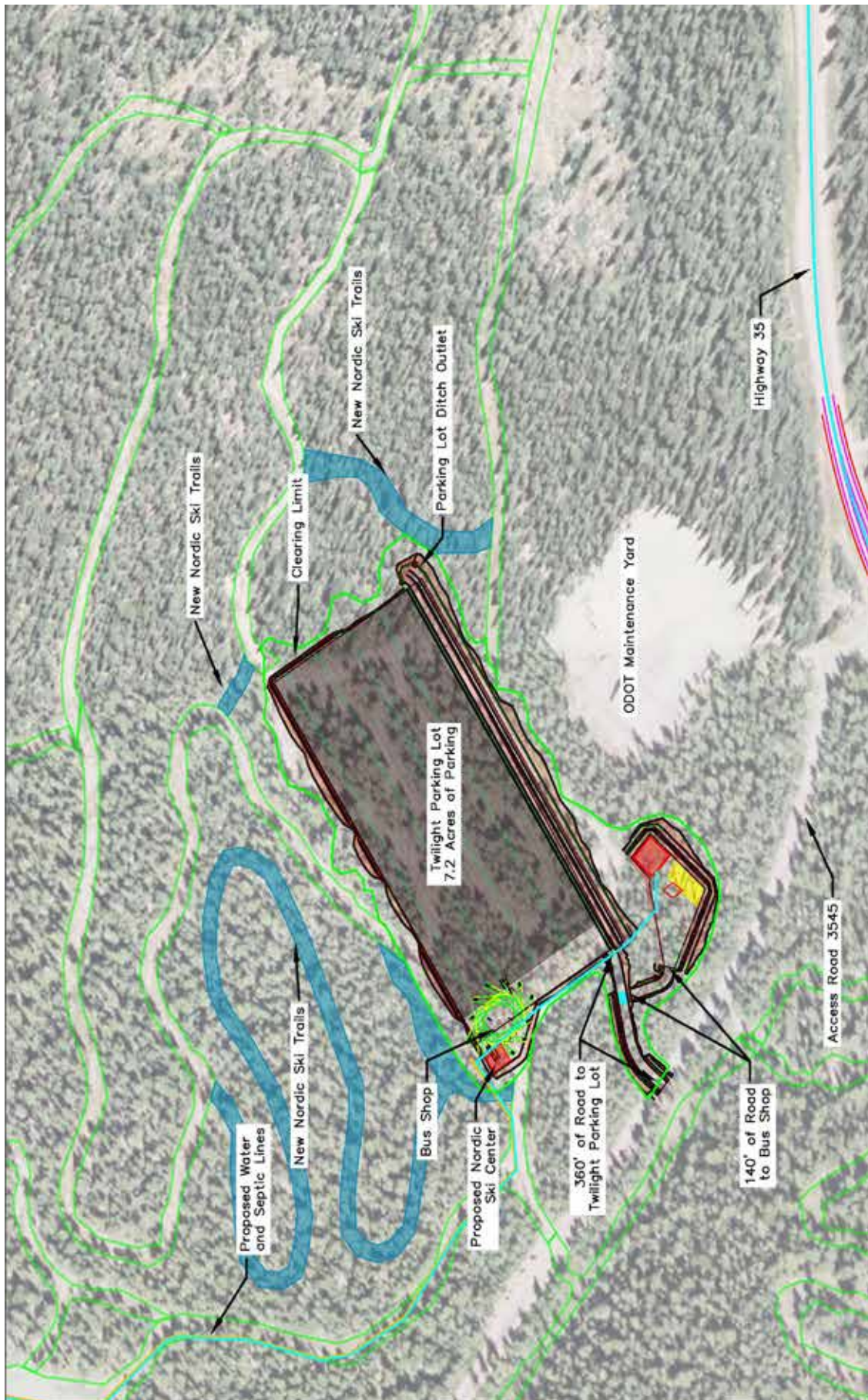


Figure 2: Alternative 6 Twilight Parking Lot

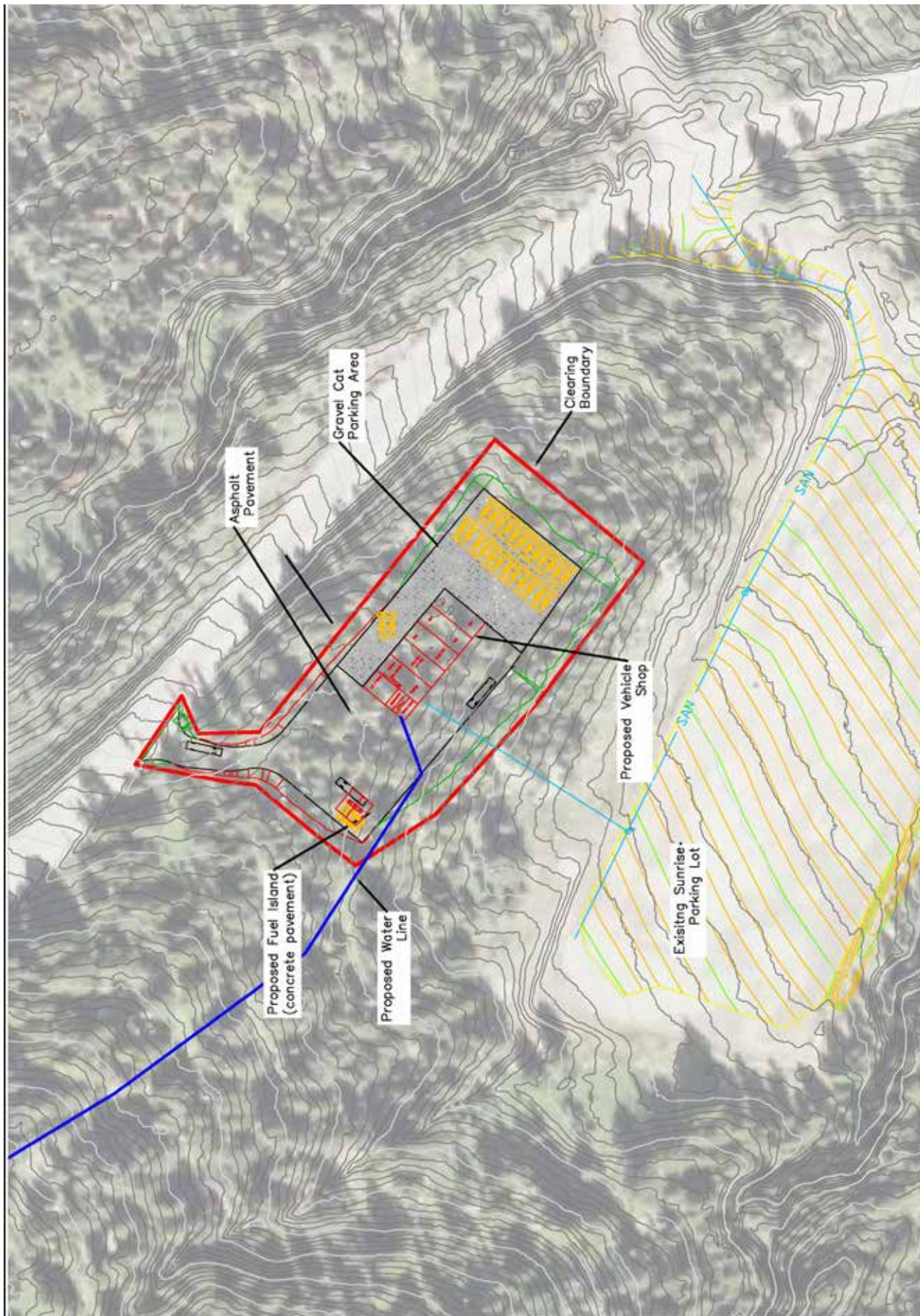


Figure 3: Alternative 6 Sunrise Vehicle Maintenance Shop

APPENDIX 2: PROJECT DESIGN CRITERIA

The National Environmental Policy Act defines “mitigation” as avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, reducing, eliminating or compensating project impacts. The following project design criteria and mitigation measures (PDC) are an integral part of this project and will be carried out if the project is implemented under Alternatives 2 through 6. PDC are not optional and are incorporated in the effects analysis in Chapter 3.

In addition to these PDC, all of the applicable Require Mitigation and Monitoring listed in Appendix A of the Record of Decision for Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan/Access Road Final Environmental Impact Statement will be included as part of this project. Some of the mitigation measures have been repeated in the following section for emphasis as related to this project. As directed by the Master Plan, “monitoring and enforcement of required mitigation measures by the Forest Service will occur through the Annual Operating Permit and the Special Use Permit. A monitoring program will be developed as part of the environmental analysis required for each phase of development and implemented as soon as possible after approval of each phase to determine the effectiveness of mitigation measures” (page A-1). The monitoring plan for this project is discussed in Section 2.5 of this EIS.

Construction

- C-1. Establish and maintain construction area limits to the minimum area necessary for completion of the project and confine disturbance within this area.
- C-2. Erosion cloth/wattles and seed should be used on fill slopes if their height exceeds three feet, otherwise seed and mulch should be sufficient.
- C-3. Seed and mulch the bare ground upon construction completion. Erosion cloth/wattles and seed should be used to cover bare ground if within Riparian Reserves¹. Cut and fill slopes will be stabilized by prompt revegetation and grading to a slope gradient or terracing approved by the Forest Service to reduce the potential of long-term erosion and slope failures (MHM ROD², Soils #2, page A-4).
- C-4. Install sediment and storm water controls prior to initiating ground disturbing activities to the extent practicable.
- C-5. For construction areas immediately adjacent to a stream or other wet area, or where fill is near a wetted stream, use appropriate erosion/sediment control barriers between the project and the stream.
- C-6. Maintain erosion and storm water controls as necessary to ensure proper and effective function by:
 - ◆ Preparing for unexpected failures of erosion control measures; and,
 - ◆ Implementing corrective actions without delay if failures are discovered to prevent pollutant discharge to nearby water bodies.

¹ -Riparian Reserve refers to the Northwest Forest Plan Riparian Reserve designation.

² -Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan Record of Decision (1997).

- C-7. To minimize tree stump removal in areas where pavement and/or structures will not be placed, trees will be flush cut to the extent feasible (MHM ROD, Soils #13, page A-4). Stumps may be ground down to reduce height, but not dug out and removed. The intent of this PDC is to minimize soil damage by retaining tree roots and minimizing disturbance.
- C-8. Dispose of waste material in stable sites out of the flood prone area and leave in a stable configuration that limits surface erosion and off-site movement of soil. Waste material other than hardened surface material (asphalt, concrete, etc.) may be used to restore natural or near-natural contours. Material disposal areas will be approved by the Forest Service prior to use.
- C-9. Minimize time in which heavy equipment is in stream channels, riparian areas, and wetlands. Forest Service personnel will approve the routes for the equipment through stream channels, riparian areas, and wetlands.
- C-10. The construction of the replacement Nordic ski trails will be completed the same year that the original trails are removed in order to allow for continuous use of the trails during the winter season.
- C-11. The new Nordic guest building will be completed within three years of project construction beginning.
- C-12. Trees greater than 8-inches diameter breast height removed as part of parking lot and other infrastructure construction will be used primarily for watershed restoration projects on the Mt. Hood National Forest and adjoining lands. Trees will be limbed and bucked to 40-foot log lengths when possible. As many trees as possible, especially in the larger diameter classes, will be pulled over to retain the root wad as part of the 40-foot log. All logs slated for watershed restoration will be decked in locations accessible to log trucks for transport away from construction areas.

The following PDCs pertain specifically to the Twilight Equipment Maintenance Yard and Sunrise Vehicle Maintenance Shop.

- C-13. Locate, design, construct and maintain petroleum and chemical delivery and storage facilities consistent with applicable local, state and federal regulations.
- C-14. Use suitable measures around vehicle service, storage and refueling areas, chemical storage and use areas, and waste dumps to fully contain spills and avoid or minimize soil contamination and seepage to groundwater.
- C-15. Prohibit excess chemicals or wastes from being stored or accumulated in either maintenance area.
- C-16. Report spills and initiate suitable clean-up action in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

Recreation

- R-1. Tow-away zones should be established and signed on the access roads to direct patrons to the developed parking areas or inform patrons that there is no parking on the access road.
- R-2. Mt. Hood Meadows should patrol and manage patron parking in authorized parking areas/lots.

- R-3. Shuttle services should not be provided from Mt. Hood Meadows Access Road (FSR 3555) Tea Cup and Bennet Pass Sno-Parks to Mt Hood Meadows Ski Resort.
- R-4. Prior to implementation of any additional authorized parking [including Twilight Parking Lot], Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort should continue to develop a mitigation plan to address winter peak period traffic congestion of Highway 26 attributable to Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort Ski Area. Coordination with ODOT is recommended (MHM ROD, Transportation #3, page A-16).
- R-5. Trail Management Objective (TMOs) should be developed in coordination with Forest Service personnel prior to the construction of any new Nordic ski trails and hiking trails.
- R-6. The permittee(s) will be responsible for the construction, management and maintenance, per Forest Service standard for all Nordic trails within the permit area.
- R-7. In order to prevent road gravel from being deposited on the Nordic ski trails, measures should be taken such as minimize traction gravel, provide a buffer, or create snow berms.
- R-8. Mowing of all Nordic trails is only permitted in the 25-foot center clearing. Mowing is not permitted within the thinned areas adjacent to the center clearing.
- R-9. During Construction activities, signs should be placed at existing trailheads to warn of timber harvest activities in the area.

Visuals

- V-1. Vegetation clearing for parking facilities should be designed to maximize the screening potential of existing vegetation when possible.
- V-2. Repetitive clearing patterns that will result in straight lines, edges, or geometric shapes of vegetation patterns and openings should be avoided. Where extensive clearing is unavoidable, natural-appearing openings should be created that resemble those of the natural characteristic landscape, such as meadows and fire-related disturbances. Existing openings may be expanded to mimic natural shapes and edges (MHM ROD, Visual Resources #3, page A-11).
- V-3. Edge treatments for all clearings should be designed in consultation with appropriate Forest Service personnel.
- V-4. Edge treatments include scalloping and feathering existing vegetation to avoid harsh unnatural linear effects. Edges of clearings in areas of multi-state and species compositions should be located, to the extent possible, to aid in creating natural – appearing transitional effects (MHM ROD, Visual Resources #4, page A-11).
- V-5. All mechanical brush piles and skid trails should be located at least 1000-feet from the Elk Meadows Trail.
- V-6. All stumps within 100-feet of the Elk Meadows trail should be cut to 6-inches in height or angled cuts away from the trail. Fresh cut surfaces should be camouflaged so they are not visible from the trail.
- V-7. Non-reflective materials will be used for exterior surfaces that blend with the environment. Facilities with reflective exterior surfaces (metal, glass, plastic, etc.) which do not blend with the summer environment will be temporarily removed, covered, painted, stained, chemi-

cally treated, etched, sandblasted, corrugated, or otherwise treated in a manner to meet solace reflectively standards in Forest Service Manual 2380 (MHM ROD, Visual Resources #8, page A-11).

- V-8. Facilities will be constructed of materials which blend with the earth tone colors of the environment. Buildings, structures, facilities and utilities will be constructed of native materials and/or painted, stained, or modified to achieve the required visual blending. Exterior colors, shapes, and textures of all facilities, except when required for safety, will be subordinate to the surrounding landscape. All exterior colors and materials will be approved by the authorized Forest Service representative prior to construction (MHM ROD, Visual Resources #9, page A-11).
- V-9. Exterior lighting will be designed to illuminate horizontal, or ground plane, surfaces only. The lighting of vertical surfaces, such as walls, which can be seen from sensitive viewpoints (Highway 35 and FSR 3545) will be avoided. Exterior lights should be from the warm spectrum wavelength, such as high pressure sodium, or other “yellow” sources (MHM ROD, Visual Resources #10, page A-11).
- V-10. The best available glazing technology will be used to subdue light transmission to the exterior of facilities. Shading devices will be used as appropriate to eliminate exterior light transmission (MHM ROD, Visual Resources #11, page A-11).

Aquatics

- A-1. Erosion control plans to reduce erosion and soil compaction will be submitted to the Forest Service for approval for each phase of construction, restoration and maintenance. If construction takes two or more years, interim erosion control methods will be identified (MHM ROD, Soils #1, page A-4).
- A-2. Ground disturbance (excavation, fill, grading) will be implemented to minimize soil exposure during periods of snowmelt and rainy periods (MHM ROD, Soils #11, page A-4). The intent of the PDC is to reduce the risk of soil erosion during late spring and early fall when storm events are common and snow does not blanket the ground.
- A-3. Inspect construction sites to verify that erosion and storm water controls are implemented and functioning as designed and are appropriately maintained.
 - ◆ Construction sites will be inspected a minimum of twice a week and within 24 hours of significant storms (0.5 inches/24 hour, or where runoff is generated).
 - ◆ In addition, inspections should occur after construction is complete until areas of bare soil are completely covered by natural vegetation growth.
- A-4. Project construction and maintenance activities will be avoided in particularly sensitive areas, areas that are consistently saturated or have perennially shallow water table conditions (i.e., wetlands), and critical areas of groundwater recharge/discharge within the Permit Area (MHM ROD, Watershed #3, page A-5).
- A-5. Appropriate no touch buffers, where needed, will be established to protect riparian areas for all construction zones and surrounding areas where ground disturbance may have potential impacts on riparian values. Forest Service personnel will establish the appropriate no touch buffer.
- A-6. Landings for cut trees and other removed vegetation will be placed in areas that will eventually be paved and/or where buildings will be constructed.

- A-7. The design of ski and hiking trails should integrate existing landform characteristics such as natural swales, dips, and elevations that don't disrupt natural water flow patterns. The intent of this PDC is to allow, the extent feasible, natural overland water flow patterns and processes to continue.
- A-8. Follow the appropriate Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) guidelines for timing of in-water work (July 15-August 31) if applicable.
- A-9. Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort will acquire all appropriate Local, State and Federal Permits for this project including, but not limited to, **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System** (NPDES) Permit Storm Water Permit for Discharge from Construction Activity and a Clean Water Act (CWA) 404 permit from the Army Corps of Engineers when dredge or fill material will be discharged to waters of the U.S.
- A-10. A Pollution and Erosion Control Plan (PECP) commensurate with the scale of the project will be required for all construction activities. At a minimum the plan will include the following.³
- ◆ Established staging areas for construction equipment storage, vehicle storage, fueling, servicing, hazardous material storage, etc. in locations that preclude erosion into or contamination of surface water and/or riparian areas. Fueling areas will be located at least 150 feet away from surface water. Staging areas should be approved by an appropriate Forest Service specialist prior to use.
 - ◆ Describe suitable measures around staging areas and waste or fill disposal sites to fully contain spills and avoid or minimize soil contamination and seepage to groundwater.
 - ◆ A description of how clearing and grubbing activities associated with construction activities will minimize or eliminate erosion and/or contamination into riparian areas and water during and following construction.
 - ◆ A Spill Prevention Control and Containment Plan (SPCCP) that describes measures to prevent or reduce impacts from potential spills (fuel, hydraulic fluid, etc.). The SPCCP will contain a description of the hazardous materials that will be used, including inventory, storage, handling procedures, and a description of quick response containment supplies that will be available on the site.
 - ◆ The SPCCP will also include detailed instructions regarding the proper reporting procedures in the event a spill occurs.
- A-11. The PECP should be included in construction contracts and/or force account work plans so that workers are aware and informed regarding the plans direction and intent.
- ◆ Designate a pollution and erosion control (PEC) supervisor who will be directly responsible for PEC review, maintenance and compliance. The name and telephone number of this person will be made available to the Ski Area Permit Administrator who is stationed in the Hood River Ranger District office.
 - ◆ The PEC supervisor must be available, 24 hours, for rapid response to PEC problems and emergencies.

³ -Project design criteria referenced as follows: National Marine Fisheries Service. April 28, 2007. Endangered Species Act – Section 7 Programmatic Consultation Biological and Conference Opinion and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation: Fish Habitat Restoration Activities in Oregon and Washington, CY2007-CY2012. NMFS No. P/NWR/2006/06530.

- ♦ A 24-hour phone number for the PEC supervisor will be posted in a clearly visible location on the project site. This number will be shared with the all of the contractor's and Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort personnel so they are aware that this person will be contacted immediately if anyone sees problems with the erosion and sediment control measures.
- A-12. Minimize the number and length of stream crossings and access routes through riparian areas. Crossings and access routes should be at right angles. Riparian and channel crossings should be approved by the appropriate Forest Service specialists prior to use. Stream crossings should not increase risks of channel re-routing at low and high water conditions.
- A-13. Existing roadways or travel paths will be used whenever reasonable. Minimize the number of new access paths to minimize impacts to vegetation. New access paths will be approved by the Forest Service prior to use.
- A-14. Where needed, include hazard tree removal (amount and type) in project design. Fall hazard trees within riparian areas when they pose a safety risk. If trees can be kept on site fall trees towards streams or other surface water (unless safety reasons preclude falling in that direction). Keep felled hazard trees on site when needed to meet coarse woody debris objectives.
- A-15. Develop a snow removal and gravel recovery plan for roads and parking areas needed for recreation, administrative, or other access to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to soil, water quality and riparian resources. The snow removal plan will be approved by the Forest Service prior to implementation. The intent of this PDC is to prevent or minimize sanding material accumulation in surrounding areas.
- A-16. The Twilight Parking Lot and Maintenance Shed should utilize storm water design methodology and treatment methods outlined in the EPA document "Technical Guidance on Implementing Runoff Requirements for Federal Projects under Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act" EP 841-B-09-001 for treatment of storm water. These designs should be reviewed by appropriate Forest Service staff prior to implementation.
- A-17. Stockpile soil from the existing wetland in the ditchline and place in newly constructed ditchline for the right turn lane on Highway 35.

Wildlife

- W-1. Any raptor nests observed in the area will be protected until evaluated by a Forest Service wildlife biologist. Disturbance of raptors or raptor nests will be prohibited except as specifically permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Habitat protection zones will be established, pursuant to Forest Plan standards, for raptor nesting areas (MHM ROD, Wildlife #3, page A-9).
- W-2. Due to the vicinity of the Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) nest to this project, there is a seasonal restriction from March 1st to July 15th within a disruption distance of 65 yards of the nest patch for chainsaws and heavy machinery. Beyond that disruption distance, work can occur earlier than July 15th.
- W-3. 40 cut trees and/or snags (preferably half of each to account for different decomposition classes) from the Twilight Parking and Sunrise Maintenance Shop will be placed in the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort permit area. Snags and cut trees in new Nordic trails will be left

where possible or placed in corridors to help with hiding cover and rearing habitat for deer and elk.

- W-4. The parking lot access road constructed under this planning process should be gated to reduce harassment to deer and elk during calving and rearing from April 30th to July 30th each year. If the ski season extends beyond April 30th, the restriction will begin as soon as the ski season ends. Also the restriction will be in place when there is less than 2-feet of snow adjacent to the Nordic ski trails in the non-compacted areas after April 30th.
- W-5. [Nordic ski trails] and other facilities will be designed to serve as habitat linkage for wildlife species by maintaining the maximum amount of timber and shrub vegetation between timber stands while allowing for safe and quality skiing opportunities. The use of natural openings will be maximized and over story removal minimized (MHM ROD, Wildlife #11, page A-10).
- W-6. Disturbances to special or unique habitats including springs, seeps, wallow areas, natural mineral deposits used as licks, and talus will be avoided. If significant disturbances to any of these habitats will occur during development, a Forest Service wildlife biologist will be notified so that site-specific mitigation can be developed and implemented prior to disturbance (MHM ROD, Wildlife #12, page A-10).

Botany/Invasive plants

- B-1. Develop and implement a post-construction site vegetation plan using suitable species and establishment techniques to revegetate the site in compliance with local direction and requirements per FSM 2070 and FSM 2080 for vegetation ecology and prevention and control of invasive species.
- B-2. In order to prevent any introduction of noxious weed and/or seeds onto the National Forest the actions conducted or authorized by written permit by the contractor, that will operate outside the limits of the road prism (including public works and service contracts), require the cleaning of all heavy equipment (bulldozers, skidders, graders, backhoes, dump trucks, etc.) prior to entering National Forest System Lands. Only construction and maintenance equipment and the equipment necessary to transport said equipment will be allowed to operate within the project area. All subsequent move-ins of equipment to the project area should be treated in the same manner as the initial move-in. This requirement does not apply to service vehicles, water trucks, pickups, cars, and/or similar vehicles (R6/SPS-601.01 Work).
- B-3. Clean all vehicles with pressurized water prior to entering Forest Service lands. Forest Service personnel should inspect off-road equipment prior to start of work to ensure it is free of all soil, seeds, vegetative matter, and other debris that could hold or contain seeds (WO-CT6.36).
- B-4. Pre-treatment of Noxious Weed sites: Spotted knapweed grows in the Oregon Department of Transportation sand-storage facility and is approved for treatment under the 2008 Site Specific Invasive Plant Treatment EIS (site treatment # 66-011). The site should be treated again in early spring 2012 if knapweed is present. Continued treatment of the site, if necessary, will reduce the risk of spreading knapweed from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) sand-storage area to the proposed project activity area.
- B-5. Rock and Soil imported to the project area must come from a weed-free source that has been certified by a Forest Service botanist, range specialist, or residing county Weed and Pest Control Department official.

- B-6. Use certified weed-free or weed-seed-free hay, straw, or wood fiber if mulch is required to prevent erosion control. Where practical, stockpile weed-seed-free topsoil and replace it on disturbed areas (e.g. road embankments, parking lot edges, etc.).
- B-7. Use local native seed from grasses and/or forbs for restoration of disturbed areas. Seed may be collected from the surrounding area and sowed directly, or consult with the district botanist for a source of local native grass seed. Locally adapted, genetically appropriate native plant materials should be given primary consideration for rehabilitating vegetation on disturbed sites (FSM 2070.3)

Cultural Resources

- H-1. All designated cultural resource sites requiring protection will have a 100-foot buffer zone where heavy machinery and timber harvest will be excluded.
- H-2. Impacts to new cultural sites identified during surveys for future projects will be avoided through project modifications. Sites that cannot be avoided, if found to be significant, will be mitigated through measures identified in consultation with SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. (MHM ROD, Cultural Resources #9, page A-14).
- H-3. If cultural resource sites or materials are encountered during project construction, all activity in the immediate area will cease and the Forest Archaeologist consulted. The Archaeologist will determine the significance of the materials and specify appropriate mitigation measures in consultation with the CTWS (MHM ROD, Cultural Resources #10, page A-14).
- H-4. Install signs asking the general public to honor tribal Treaty Rights with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and refrain from collecting huckleberries over a 13.5 acre area in the vicinity of the proposed improvements. The area represents the greatest possible loss of huckleberries in any of the action alternatives.
- H-5. If new huckleberry production does not increase adjacent to the Nordic trail or within the newly signed area, government-to-government consultation with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs may be re-initiated to discussion mitigation measures to offset the permanent loss of huckleberries resulting from this project.
- H-6. Educate the members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs about production of the huckleberries and location of new area within Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort Permit area.

Vegetation Management

- VM-1. A vegetation management plan will be prepared for each phase of development that describes the treatment and prescriptions needed to perpetuate a healthy mixture of vegetation with a visually-pleasing mosaic pattern of vegetation types. Vegetation treatments will be determined based on sound silvicultural prescriptions and be designed to avoid injury, decay or disease to remaining trees (MHM ROD, Vegetation #7, page A-7).
- VM-2. Mt. Hood Meadows should prepare a vegetation management plan for the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski permitted area. The management plan should address formal ski terrain-construction and maintenance; developed facilities-construction and maintenance; tree island-glading construction and maintenance; tree island-tree skiing/multiple generation thin; Whitebark Pine restoration thin; restoration site maintenance; wildlife habitat treatment; huckleberry treatment; and, hazard tree management.
- VM-3. Any live Whitebark Pine trees that are removed as part of this project will be transplanted within the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort permit area, if feasible. If it is not feasible

to transplant the impacted Whitebark Pine, a new rust resistant seedling will be planted within the permit area.

- VM-4. During construction a vegetation protection plan approved by the District Ranger will be used that outlines specific measures safeguarding against accidental or unplanned destruction of vegetation. Leave trees, islands and tree clearing limits will be adequately marked to avoid mistakes in clearing limits over time (MHM ROD, Vegetation #8, page A-7).
- VM-5. Clearing and construction practices that minimize surface disturbance and vegetation removal will be utilized (MHM ROD, Vegetation #1, page A-6).
- VM-6. The use of native species for landscaping and reclamation will be encouraged wherever possible in an effort to re-establish native vegetation over time (MHM ROD, Vegetation #3, page A-6).
- VM-7. Dispersed trampling of plant communities will be avoided through construction of formal paths in heavy use areas and through other approved means (MHM ROD, Vegetation #4, page A-7).

Transportation

- T-1. Mt. Hood Meadows will assume responsibility for maintenance of the proposed access roads.
- T-2. In cooperation with ODOT, a traffic monitoring program will be maintained at MHM to be able to determine the effectiveness of traffic mitigation measures and the correlation of ski area usage to the total traffic volume.

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